



GREENSBORO URBAN AREA Metropolitan Planning Organization

TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

**Minutes of September 18, 2002
2:00 p.m. Greensboro, NC
County Commissioners' Briefing Room (Blue Room)
Old Guilford County Courthouse**

ATTENDANCE

Jim Westmoreland	TCC Chair/GDOT	Mike Cowan	NCDOT – Div. 7
Tyler Meyer	GDOT	Cathy Houser	NCDOT – Design Services
Craig McKinney	GDOT	Tom Martin	Greensboro Planning Dept.
Bill Marley	FHWA	Allen Purser	Greensboro Chamber of Commerce
Jeff Sovich	GDOT	Jim Ayers	Mayor, Town of Pleasant Garden
Scott Rhine	PART	Frank Wyatt	Engineering & Inspections
Les Eger	Guilford County	Libby James	GTA
Anson Gock	NCDOT		

Tyler Meyer called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 p.m.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes of June 19, 2002

Libby James moved for the approval of June 19, 2002 minutes. Frank Wyatt seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes as prepared.

2. Amend 2002 – 2008 MTIP Public Transportation Element

Tyler Meyer advised that this amendment would need to be deferred until the next meeting because required correspondence between Greensboro Transit Authority and the Federal Transit Administration had not been completed.

Libby James commented that this amendment would add additional funds to cover the purchase of ten additional vans and ten buses.

Business Items

1. Bryan Boulevard Project Report

Cathy Houser presented to the Committee a report on the Bryan Boulevard project. Years ago the airport hired a firm to begin final documentation and preliminary design on the airport study which included upgrading Bryan Boulevard. She described the two alternatives that were developed and, using a large map, explained the chosen alternative. There would be one interchange at Old Oak Ridge Road. At one point on Bryan Boulevard there would be a 70 feet median to accommodate future lanes. The project should be completed in the spring of 2006. There will be a five-leg interchange at Old Oak Ridge Road and the interchange at Inman Road would be coming out. In a public hearing on August 1st, most of the comments from area residents concerned the expansion of Piedmont Triad International Airport and the Federal Express hub, rather than the Bryan Boulevard relocation. Efforts to coordinate with the airport are being made to address those concerns. Minutes from the hearing would be completed and distributed in approximately two weeks and the MPO will receive a copy of those minutes.

Jim Westmoreland asked if the interchange would accommodate any future lanes for I-73. Cathy Houser explained that the interchange would accommodate additional lanes for I-73.

2. Transportation Management Area Status

Tyler Meyer advised that the MPO has been designated as a TMA. Bill Marley explained that an Urbanized Area is designated as a TMA, when its population reaches 200,000 or more. Based on Census 2000 data, Greensboro's Urbanized Area population is 267,000. Various changes in the MPO's procedures would result from designation as a TMA. These changes include: 1) Greensboro's planning process would need to be certified every three years by officials of the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration; 2) Greensboro would need to develop a Congestion Management System within 18 months of the designation. The CMS would allow for more accurate traffic data collection and more efficient use of that data to alleviate traffic congestion. Greensboro has already taken steps that lay a foundation for a CMS; 3) Transit funds would be directly apportioned to Greensboro, allowing for greater local flexibility in programming; 4) Greensboro would receive STP Direct Attributable funds, which also increase local spending authority. NCDOT has drafted guidance for the distribution of STP-DA funds to TMAs, and will circulate this draft to the TMAs in the fall; 5) Greensboro's Unified Planning Work Program will now require approval by the Federal Highway Administration; and 6) Greensboro's process for including public involvement in transportation planning will need to be documented and implemented.

3. MPO Boundary, Structure and Governance Review

Tyler Meyer advised that the MPO is established and regulated under federal law and has been in place since the 1973 Federal Highway Act. Each decennial census brings a review of the MPO's boundaries to identify and account for changes in population distribution. Likewise, TMA status brings a review of MPO structure and governance. Chapter 136, Article 16, Section 200.2 of North Carolina General Statutes (formerly known as House Bill 1288) echoes these requirements and adds state requirements on MPO reporting and on regional air quality strategies.

The Urbanized Area (UZA) boundary is determined by the Census Bureau and is based on a computer algorithm. The UZA population is the basis of STP-DA and PL fund distribution, while the UZA boundary is the dividing line between urban and rural functional classifications at the federal level. For the purposes of improving consistency in urban/rural designations and efficiency in distribution of federal highway funding, it is important for an MPO to adopt an adjusted UZA boundary. This adjusted boundary is used only in the assignment of federal highway funds and does not affect the overall funding levels or eligibility. An adjusted UZA boundary must, at a minimum, include the entire Census-designated UZA boundary.

The Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB) delineates the MPO's planning area, and includes that area anticipated to become urban within twenty years. The MAB should be reviewed and adjusted as needed to reflect growth trends and relationships with contiguous MPOs. The only potential adjustments anticipated would be along the shared border with the High Point Urban Area MPO.

Following TMA designation, a review of the MPO's structure and governance is required. The fundamental concern that must be addressed by this review is whether operators of public transportation systems in the area are adequately represented on the TAC. General Statutes 136-16-200.2 suggests a somewhat broader review of the MPO structure to include representation of other government entities and relationships with planning partners.

NCGS 136-16-200.2 also establishes a reporting requirement. The MPO is to prepare a report of its findings by December 2002. The Statewide Planning Branch would incorporate a report to the Governor and Joint Transportation Oversight Committee. The implementation of the review is expected by mid-2003.

NCGS 136-16-200.2 further requires that all MPOs within a designated Air Quality Non-Attainment Area prepare a region-wide unified strategy for achieving conformity. The Regional Conformity Strategy is not a technical analysis or LRTP. The Strategy is to reflect that the MPO's long-range plans and conformity efforts are coordinated. The Strategy must be developed within one year of the non-attainment designation, or the State will withhold matching funds, state highway funds and CMAQ funds. The goal of this requirement is for MPOs develop a reasonable process. The Triad MPOs and PART have already drafted a conformity strategy and currently have coordinated plans. A copy of this draft was submitted to the Division of Air Quality and the Statewide Planning Branch. Scott Rhine commented that the letters that were received from NCDOT and NCDENR were positive. Tyler Meyer advised that this state level requirement involves only state funds and state actions and does not affect conformity status of MPOs.

The next step in this process would be to review the requirements further and present findings, points for discussion, and recommendations at an upcoming TCC meeting..

4. STP DA Funds

Tyler Meyer advised that Surface Transportation Program Direct Attributable funds are federal highway funds received by the State and distributed to TMAs. North Carolina's annual apportionment of STP-DA funds is approximately \$20 million. The TMAs may direct STP-DA funds to state projects or local projects, however for local projects, local jurisdictions are typically responsible for supplying local matching funds and for satisfying project management requirements.

On August 29, 2001 the TAC passed a resolution to assume the authority for directing Greensboro's allocation of STP-DA funds. The resolution informed NCDOT of Greensboro's intent to direct these funds and initiated consultation with NCDOT, which is ongoing. NCDOT is currently developing a process for administering STP-DA funds among the state's 7 TMAs (three of which are newly designated), which will be finalized in the near future. Tentatively, the FY 2003 allocation for Greensboro is \$1.95 million, and future years' allocations may be larger.

Currently, the draft TIP spreads most of Greensboro's STP-DA funds among projects which were already existing, although the MPO could choose to reprogram its STP-DA allocation to other projects to better reflect local preferences. The options for directing our STP-DA funds currently being studied by staff include: using the entire allocation as shown in the draft TIP; reprogramming the entire allocation for other uses including state projects, incidental projects, and local projects; some combination of these two approaches; or keeping the first two years of STP-DA funds as they are currently shown, but programming funds for the remaining years of the '04-'10 TIP, and all future TIP cycles, according to local preferences. Staff will continue to review the draft TIP and STP-DA options. Results and recommendations will be presented at an upcoming meeting.

5. Future Meeting Schedule

Jeff Sovich advised the Committee that some members have encountered recurring scheduling conflicts that prevent them from attending the MPO meetings on the third Wednesday of the month. In order to better accommodate all members, it is advisable to consider changing the regular meeting date. The first alternative would be the second Thursday of each month; the second choice would be the fourth Wednesday of each month. The committee members were asked to review the calendar that was provided. In addition to discussing changes to the meeting date, the committee concurred that future TCC meetings would begin at 1:30 p.m., to allow more time for presentation, discussions, and networking. Tyler Meyer added that a notice would be sent out to TCC members after the TAC has finalized a new meeting schedule.

6. Planning Work Report

Tyler Meyer informed the TCC that the draft 2004 to 2010 TIP is being developed and will continue to be developed over the fall. A public meeting will be held on October 23rd at the Lake Mackintosh Marina from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m, during which NCDOT will receive comments on the draft TIP.

The TCC adjourned at 3:00 p.m.